

Faber Family Law LLC

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Joint Ways and Means Committee

Via Email

March 31, 2019

Re: Domestic Violence Clinic Impact-HB 5024 Higher Education Coordinating Committee (HECC) budget bill

Dear Committee Members:

The Domestic Violence Clinic shaped my career and my service to my community for the better. I was a student of the clinic from 2008-2009. During my time at the clinic, I learned how to competently defend Family Abuse Prevention Act Restraining Orders and Stalking Protective Orders. I mastered the statutory factors as well as the art of preparing evidence and witnesses on short notice.

Most importantly, I learned about the psychological impact of domestic abuse. Abuse victims are difficult clients. In general, survivors of domestic abuse tend to have mental health problems such as post traumatic stress disorder. Sometimes they are untrusting to the point of paranoia, unsure if their lawyer is truly serving their interests. Sometimes they are unable to make basic decisions for themselves or advocate for themselves due to years of having their agency stifled by their abuser. I learned to have patience and empathy, and I learned how to help these clients despite these hurdles.

I now offer a discounted rate of \$100/hour to survivors of domestic violence. I do not base the discount on ability to pay, because as I learned in the Domestic Violence Clinic, an abusive opposing party will drive up the cost of the case. The abuser does not care about reaching an end to the matter, but rather frequently relishes in prolonging it, using the system to further target their victim. I offer the discount so that the survivor of

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domestic violence does not pay twice as much for their family law matter as a person who does not have an abusive opposing party.

I receive so many referrals for these matters that I sometimes need to turn them away. There are not enough lawyers in Portland doing this sort of work, and there are certainly not enough offering this work competently at an affordable rate. The Domestic Violence Clinic produces lawyers competent and eager to serve this need in the community.

When the people of Oregon spend money to educate lawyers in the defense of domestic violence survivors, they spend their money to assure that Oregon is a place where domestic violence survivors can find safety, peace, and protection for their children. In addition, competent representation of domestic violence survivors keeps survivors out of shelters and off of state assistance. With representation, survivors are able to access their rights under Oregon law to receive financial support from their abusers.

I urge the Committee to continue funding the Domestic Violence Clinical Legal Education Fund, as the clinic's work serves the people of Oregon, both financially and socially.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandy Faber', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sandy Faber